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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: APRIL 03, 2009

Summary: The G-20 leaders' agreement to "spend their way out of the current global recession with an injection of about 1.1 trillion dollar worldwide" dominated headlines in almost all newspapers on Friday. Newspapers highlighted reports that "Obama administration plans to seek as much as \$3 billion over the next five years to train and equip Pakistan's military." The postponement of "hearing on a proposal to triple economic assistance to Pakistan" by a U.S. Senate panel figured prominently. U.S. President Obama's concern about extremists and terrorists "who have made camp in the border regions of Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan" received extensive coverage. All newspapers reported the Foreign Office's statement that the "drone issue would be taken up with Holbrooke."

The volatile security situation of the country remained the main focus of the editorialists and op-ed writers. Commenting on the drone attack on the Orakzai Agency, the centrist national daily, "The News," observed that "Washington has every intention of stepping up its war, and quite clearly believes it is essential if there is to be any success in eliminating the militants who remain entrenched in these areas..." The second-largest Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt," opined that the "U.S. wants to see Pakistan suffer like Iraq and Afghanistan while it continues with the ongoing war on the pretext of terrorism..." The Lahore-based liberal daily, "Daily Times," in its editorial titled, "Logic of Drone Attacks," noted that "one thing is certain: the local population (in Wana, Ladda, Miranshah, Razmak and Parachinar) is against the TTP (Tehrik-i-Taliban of Pakistan) and doesn't mind too much if the Americans take it out in the absence of an adequate Pakistani response." End Summary.

News Stories

"G-20 To Fight Cash Crunch With \$1 Trillion" "Dawn" (04/03)

"G-20 leaders agreed to spend their way out of the current global recession with an injection of about \$1.1 trillion worldwide, which would take their collective contribution in the fight against the economic meltdown to \$5 trillion by the end of next year."

"U.S. Seeks \$3 Billion For Pakistani Military" "Dawn" (04/03)

"The Obama administration is seeking as much as \$3 billion over the next five years to train and equip Pakistan's military, Pakistan Embassy officials in Washington told 'Dawn.' The money would include \$500 million in an additional war budget request for the coming year that will go to Congress this month."

"U.S. Senate Panel Puts Off Hearing Of Aid Bill For Indefinite Period" "Dawn" (04/03)

"A U.S. Senate panel has postponed indefinitely a much-awaited hearing on a proposal to triple economic assistance to Pakistan.... The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations had scheduled a full Committee hearing on Wednesday but it had to be postponed for technical reasons."

"Obama 'Very Concerned' About Militants in FATA" "The News" (04/03)

"U.S. President Barack Obama said on Thursday he was 'very concerned' about extremists who have holed up on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Obama told reporters after talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the G-20 economic summit that they had discussed the threat posed by the militants."

"Drone Attacks Issue To Be Taken Up With Holbrooke: FO" "Dawn" (04/03)

"Pakistan said on Thursday that drone attacks inside its territory were unacceptable and it would issue a demarche to the United States over the violation of its sovereignty. Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit told reporters at his weekly briefing that the issue would be taken up with U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke during his visit to Pakistan next week."

"Holbrooke, Mullen To Visit Pakistan On 6th" "The Post" (04/03)

"U.S. special envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke and U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen will arrive in Pakistan on a two-day visit on April 6, according to Defense sources."

"Mullen Comfortable With Pak Nukes" "The News" (04/03)

"The top U.S. military officer said on Thursday he is 'reasonably comfortable' Pakistan's nuclear weapons are secure. Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a lunchtime audience at the Hudson Union Society, said the US has invested in an effort to keep the weapons secure and that Pakistan has 'taken significant steps in recent years, so I'm comfortable.'

"Pakistan's N-Security Second To None" "Dawn" (04/03)

"Pakistan maintains security around its atomic sites that is second to none and the world has no cause for concern, a senior Pakistani official has said."

"Think-Tank Urges U.S. Focus On Pakistan" "The News" (04/03)

"The U.S. policy on Afghanistan must focus on Pakistan, strengthening civilian government and ending the use of militant groups as an instrument of foreign policy, according to a report by Barnett Rubin, a think tank with close ties to the Obama administration."

"No Sign Of A Composite Government Strategy On Obama Policy" website "The News" (04/03)

"Does the government of Pakistan comprehend the internal and external "multiple challenges" that it is faced with? Is it at any level trying to figure out a comprehensive strategy to meet these challenges? Has the recent, very controversial Pak-Afghan U.S. policy, announced by President Barrack Hussain Obama, given the presidency, the Prime Minister's Secretariat, the Foreign Ministry and the General Headquarters reason to jointly formulate a forward-looking and sustainable strategy? None appears to be forthcoming, even at a time when Pakistan has been pushed into a tight corner by the western capitals, a country which in the past bestowed with the title of the most favored non-NATO ally. One of Pakistan's most accomplished former diplomat, Munir Akram, turned the tables on Washington when on Wednesday he made mockery of Obama's conditionalities of providing aid to Pakistan by saying that there would be no 'blank cheques.'"

"Obama Plan Seen As Disastrous For Pakistan" "The News" (04/03)

"Top experts on Afghanistan and Pakistan's troubled tribal areas agree that President Barack Obama's new strategy for the region is a recipe for disaster from Islamabad's point of view. They lament that short-sighted people at the helm of affairs are jubilant over the \$1.5 billion yearly reward for implementation of the plan. 'Pakistan would be reduced to a battlefield if our leadership accedes to Obama's strategy,' commented Rustam Shah Mohmand, former interior secretary, former ambassador to Afghanistan and a top security expert. Former FATA Secretary Brig (R) Mehmud Shah is of the view these are testing times for political as well as military leaders, who are expected to defend Pakistan against the sinister Zionist conspiracy to destabilize and denuclearize Pakistan. Yet another renowned expert on Afghanistan and tribal areas and a respected journalist, Rahimullah Yousafzai, warned the Obama strategy would lead to instability in Pakistan."

"U.S. Should Not Worry About Proper Use Of Aid: Gilani" "Daily Times" (04/03)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani rejected in an interview on Thursday U.S. concerns on how Islamabad would use the increased aid given by Washington. He said the Obama administration 'should not worry about the proper use of its aid.'"

"In Major U-Turn, Nawaz To Visit U.S. Embassy" "The News" (04/03)

"PML-N Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif has agreed to visit the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad to meet President Obama's Special Representative Richard Holbrooke during his forthcoming visit to Pakistan, according to reliable sources...."

"Nawaz Critical Of Obama's AfPak Strategy" "The Nation" (04/03)

"U.S. President Barack Obama's policy to halt the advance of militants in Pakistan differs little from the disastrous one pursued by his predecessor, Nawaz Sharif, leader of the opposition, told the 'Financial Times.'"

"Pak-U.S. Collaboration For \$24 Million Energy Project" "Daily Times," "The Nation," "The Frontier Post," "Jang," "Nawa-i-Waqt," "Khabrain," "Ausaf," and "Din" (04/03)

"A Joint Statement of Collaboration was signed between the United States Government and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs Revenue & Statistics, Government of Pakistan. The signing marked the announcement of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) 3-year, \$24 million Energy Efficiency and Capacity Building project, according to a U.S. Embassy announcement made on Thursday."

"U.S. Seeks To Enlist Insiders' Help To Tame ISI" "Dawn" (04/03)

"The United States wants to empower those elements in the Pakistani government and the military who want to cooperate effectively in the war against terror but are prevented by the ISI from doing so, says a senior Pentagon official."

"U.S. Efforts To Reduce Pakistan, India Tensions" "The Post" (04/03)

"The United States has launched a diplomatic effort to ease tensions between India and Pakistan that have decades-old lingering conflict over Kashmir, in order to allow Islamabad to focus more effectively on fighting al-Qaeda and Taliban militants on its western border with Afghanistan, top American defence officials said."

"3 Members of UN Probe Team Arrive" "Dawn" (04/03)

"A technical team of the United Nations arrived in Islamabad on Thursday to carry out preliminary work for initiating an inquiry into former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's assassination."

"Taliban Beheaded Police Officer In Peshawar" "The Nation" (04/03)

"Security forces on Thursday recovered the beheaded corpse of a police officer abducted by militants in Peshawar, police said."

"Failed Attacker Kills Himself In Dir" "Dawn" (04/03)

"A man shot himself dead in Upper Dir on Thursday after a hand grenade he had hurled at the funeral of a slain police official failed to explode."

"Militants Free 10 Khasadars" "The News" (04/03)

"Militants on Thursday freed 10 Khasadars who were kidnapped from Bara sub-division of Khyber Agency five days back."

"Independent Courts Key To Malakand Peace: Sufi" "The News" (04/03)

"Chief of Tanzim Nafaz Shariat-e- Muhammadi (TNSM) Maulana Sufi Muhammad on Thursday said peace would return to Malakand Division only after the Qazi courts were made independent."

"Girl Flogged as Taliban Deliver 'Justice' "The Nation" (04/03)

"A video showing a teenage girl being flogged by Taliban fighters has emerged from the Swat Valley, offering a shocking glimpse of militant brutality in the once-peaceful district."

"NWFP 'At War,' Governance Becoming Difficult: Hoti" "Daily Times" (04/03)

"The NWFP is at 'war' and governance of the province is 'becoming difficult,' Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti Said on Thursday."

Editorials/Op-eds

"A Bigger Battle Zone," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/03)

"Washington has every intention of stepping up its war, and quite clearly believes it is essential if there is to be any success in eliminating the militants who remain entrenched in these areas.... The key problem seems to be a failure on the part of Islamabad to put forward a clear alternative strategy before Washington. While it has consistently opposed drone attacks, possibly as part of a strategy agreed on with U.S. decision-makers, it does not say what the options are. Beyond rhetoric, there has been no detail of plans or strategies. There can be no doubt the drone strikes have inflicted much damage - on Pakistan's sovereignty, on innocent citizens and on the war against terror itself given the anger the bombings generate. We are convinced of this. But what we need to hear more of are viable options, so that the strikes can be replaced by other means to deal with militants."

"Britain And America's Open Declaration Of War Against Us," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (04/03)

"The statements by American Commander General Petraeus and Admiral Mike Mullen are demonstrative of American declaration of war against us. America wants to see Pakistan suffer like Iraq and Afghanistan while it continues with the ongoing war on the pretext of terrorism.... Our government and military leaderships should think about the defense of the country and extricate Pakistan from the war on terror."

"Logic Of Drone Attacks," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (04/03)

"One thing is certain: the local population [in Wana, Ladda, Miranshah, Razmak and Parachinar] is against the TTP and doesn't mind too much if the Americans take it out in the absence of an adequate Pakistani response. The Pakistani stance that its sovereignty is being violated by the drones is weakened by the day by the very clear loss of Pakistan's sovereign territory to the TTP and the inability of the state of Pakistan to either recapture it or come to the rescue of the local population. The 'external' argument that this lost territory brings the world under real threat of terrorist attacks through the local and foreign terrorists also gains strength as Baitullah Mehsud extends his violence-based

emirate to Punjab and Sindh in the coming days."

"Yet Another Drone Attack," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (04/03)

"Pakistan would like the new U.S. administration to rethink the Obama strategy keeping in view the fact that as the war on terror enters its ninth year the American thinking remains the same therefore oblivious of the transformation Al Qaeda must have undergone.... There are also differences of opinion about the quality and quantity of economic assistance. Obviously, the Obama strategy has not gelled with an average Pakistani, a situation made unpalatable all the more with drone attacks."

"No More Confusion On Terrorism," an op-ed by Shafqat Mahmood in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/03)

"Drone attacks are not good, but every time they happen, it is largely foreigners who are killed. Why is it that we worry about the one aspect but not the other? Clearly, the world is deeply concerned about the presence of extremist elements in our country who threaten their security. If we do not take notice of their concern, they will not wait for us to get our act together. It is this challenge that we have to meet."

"U.S. Plan To Monitor Aid At The District Level," an editorial note in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (04/03)

"Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher has said that America will give more aid to Pakistan this time around, but it will be monitored minutely by to-be-appointed officials at district level.... What is the guarantee that America will not demand its officials access every nook and corner of the country? Who will be these monitors? They could be from CIA. It seems a conspiracy is on to control the entire country.... American aid would not be required if we control our non-development expenditure. We should reject the aid which is detrimental to the country's security."

"The Threat Is Real," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (04/03)

"There are plenty of reasons to worry about militancy. One, territorial control is a key aim of the militants. It's pointless espousing a particular worldview if you don't have a place to implement it. Two, militants aren't necessarily 'religious,' even in the extremist sense. Many militant groups in Pakistan today attract criminals and thugs for whom the exercise of power is the primary goal. Three, despite domestic notions of a 'strong' state, Pakistan is actually quite weak and can be destabilized relatively easily. In fact, it is being destabilized from within. Denial of the threat of militancy is no longer an option."

"Ankara Summit," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/03)

"With Islamabad and Kabul under increasing U.S. pressure to do more in the war against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, it is all the more necessary for them to undertake regular consultations. They need to evolve a common strategy to deal with the terrorists who are out to destabilize the two countries, as well as to resist the unreasonable demands by Washington, which often go against their national interests."

"America's Last Option And The Prerequisites Of The Situation," an editorial in the Lahore-based Urdu daily "Waqt" (04/03)

"Gen Petraeus' insistence that we will launch an operation inside Pakistan as a last option points to a situation that will be even more dangerous than the drone attacks. The \$1.5 billion announced by the U.S. President cannot act as balm for the injuries we have sustained fighting this war; nor can this amount alleviate our sense of helplessness. Allegations are being made that our sensitive institutions like the ISI are providing military and financial aid to the Taliban and other militants. The real reason for such heinous allegations against the ISI is that it is blocking the way of Israeli and Indian designs. .. If the U.S. administration now insists on using its last option [in Pakistan] the results will be

devastating for all. Even the U.S. and Europe will not be able to save themselves from this fire."

"U.S. Administration's Baseless Apprehensions," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (04/03)

"President Obama has again alleged that Al Qaeda is planning attacks on the U.S. from Pakistan.... [The U.S. attacked Iraq on the pretext of WMDs] but those WMDs were never found. Eventually, President Bush made a perfunctory apology and the matter was put in cold storage. No one asked: Sir, what was the fault of those thousands of innocent Iraqis who lost their lives. This story was repeated in Afghanistan. The U.S. turned the entire country into Tora Bora but Usama somehow disappeared into thin air. Now the same stage is being set in Pakistan. After all, the U.S. has to find some scapegoat for its failures in Iraq and Afghanistan."

"Dissecting Obama's Speech," an op-ed by Najmuddin A. Shaikh in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (04/03)

"The Pakistani establishment, particularly after the two tragedies in Lahore, will be able to overcome the forces within its ranks that have so far successfully advocated the policy of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. They may be helped in this endeavor by Obama's offer of concrete assistance: 'we must focus our military assistance on the tools, training and support that Pakistan needs to root out the terrorists.'"

"Obama's New Strategy - A Delusion," an op-ed by Mohammad Jamil in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/03)

"As regards propaganda campagn against the ISI, it has malicious intent because the ISI is the eyes and ears of the armed forces. And those who wish to harm Pakistan want that it becomes ineffective so that they could advance their agenda.... The U.S. and the West should stop criticizing the Pakistan army and the ISI, because under no circumstances Pakistan would buy in their flawed logic and give in to their demands that run counter to Pakistan's national interest and could make Pakistan's security environment perilous."

"U.S. And Iran," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (04/03)

"If Israel, a nuclear-weapons state, still continues to harp on the 'danger' Iran poses, it only creates doubts about its own credibility and good faith. If wars and cross-border military action were to be justified under international law on flimsy grounds such as paranoid fears or a policy of pre-emption when no violation of the law has actually taken place, the entire global system would go haywire. No doubt nuclear arms do pose a risk to mankind. But the problem needs to be addressed rationally and equitably so that the world is not divided into nuclear haves and have-nots."

"Threat Of Israeli Attack On Iran?," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (04/03)

"U.S. military commander for the Middle East General David Petraeus has said that Israel could attack Iran in order to stop it from making nuclear weapons. In a statement before American Congress the General said that Israel is feeling threatened of Iran and does not want it to have freehand to manufacture nuclear weapons.... Israel attacked Iraqi nuclear installations several years ago. However, Israel will get a befitting response if it did the folly of attacking Iran. Moreover, the entire region will be embroiled in a bigger war."

"G-20 Summit And The Global Recession," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 100,000) (04/03)

"Many countries included in G-20 are followers of Christianity; if they are not moved by the increasing poverty and unemployment around the world, they should at least heed what the Pope has said. Addressing participants from the world major industrial capitals, Pope Benedict has urged them to unite in eliminating poverty from

the world. There is no doubt that hatred for these countries will increase if they do not pay attention to the sentiments hidden in the protests surrounding the summit. They must remember that if third world economies crash due to the recession, where will they [G-20 states] sell their products."

"Protests At The G-20 Summit," an editorial note in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (04/03)

"Protestors at the G-20 summit raised slogans like 'War Class' and 'Summit of Thieves,' which reveals the fact that the people are sick of the unfair and cruel division of wealth in this system.... If the G-20 countries want to retain the present capitalist system they will have to strive for equitable distribution of wealth and the establishment of welfare states not just in their own countries but around the world."

Patterson